



# MAPSA

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The Honorable Phil Pavlov  
Chair  
Committee on Education  
Michigan State Senate  
Lansing, MI 48909

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the package of bills addressing teacher and leader evaluation.

My name is Julie Durham, and I am the Director of Research and Data Initiatives for the Michigan Association of Public School Academies. I currently direct evaluations of over 900 teachers and 30 school leaders as part of a federally funded Teacher Incentive Grant. The grant is designed to determine if incentives paid to teachers impact their effectiveness and in turn, student achievement.

Parents deserve some assurance that those responsible for their children's education are effective at their job. Taxpayers need to know that their children are being served to their greatest potential. Great educators want effective evaluation, feedback and coaching. Senate Bill 103 goes a long way to address these issues, and does so in a way that recognizes schools individuality, teacher professional development, and the multiple ways that a teacher impacts his or her students.

The current bill thankfully retreats back from the previous teacher evaluation bill that over legislated the use of specific evaluation systems and cumbersome validation processes. The current bill allows for:

- Schools to create or select the evaluation tool that works best for them, while requiring schools to show due diligence in researching and implementing valid evaluation rubrics. **This reflects and supports the differences we see in Michigan schools, and allows schools to adopt processes that reflect the unique pedagogy and curriculum they have adopted.**
- Multiple opportunities for teacher support and improvement through the use of individual development plans. **These plans support continued improvement of teachers throughout the year, and ensure that they are given opportunities to increase their capacity.**
- School leaders who are responsible for evaluations AND held accountable to the quality of those observations. **When we trust in school leaders to both conduct high quality observations and lead teachers in individualized development plans, we see them become instructional leaders in their schools.**
- Student growth as a primary component of teacher performance evaluations. **Using student growth recognizes that teachers have students of all abilities, but also recognizes that we still have a responsibility to educate even the hardest students.**

Most importantly, MAPSA believes that a teacher and leader evaluation system be:

- Based on research of effective teaching practices.
- Implemented consistently at a school.
- Implemented by well-trained leaders and peer observers.
- Used to improve the competencies and effectiveness of teachers.
- Favor and recognize student growth over achievement alone.
- Allow schools to use their own growth assessments and individualized learning objectives to measure growth when necessary.

An administrator or school leader should be able to, with input from their teachers, create an observation tool and evaluation system that reflects the ever-changing needs of their school. This bill provides leaders with the legislative support to be true instructional leaders at their schools. We believe that this is the only support required to implement teacher evaluations effectively at schools, and support the removal of implementation funds for teacher evaluation. We are so confident about a school's ability to carry out observation activities because we know that it is already happening. We know that in almost all charter schools in the state, schools are implementing interim assessments, observing teachers using valid rubrics, and even paying teachers performance based incentives. They are doing this with less money than almost every traditional public school.

I want to clarify and give some feedback on the testimony and questions during the last committee hearing. Student growth is not an unproven science. There are multiple valid and reliable assessments that schools are using to measure growth. What will be unproven science is the determination of what growth is on a new assessment that has only been implemented with students for a few years.

MAPSA believes in and supports this bill because of the trust it puts in the hands of teachers and leaders to provide a quality education to their students. Each of the schools we work with in Detroit has extensive teacher evaluation processes already in place that use combinations of nationally normed, interim assessments, multiple observations a year, and valid rubrics that support teacher growth and development. They are accomplishing this without intrusive legislation or additional financial support. Charter schools serve as great examples of what teacher support, growth, and development looks like in an environment unencumbered with bureaucratic processes and entrenched interests. Evaluating teachers and leaders consistently and creating a safe environment of support for their professional growth is a minimal expectation we have for ALL schools in Michigan. We do not consider this an additional responsibility of leaders; we consider this a vital and central roll of school leadership.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Julie Durham, Director of Research and Data Initiatives